Modernising telegraph services

193. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have drawn any plan to modernise telegraph services in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the plan and what are the cities and towns which will be earmarked for modernisation of telegraph services ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Yes, Sir. An Action Plan has been drawn up to modernise telegraph services in the country.

(b) The Action Plan envisages delivery of 98% of the telegrams within a period of 12 hours from the booking time and 100% within 24 hours. In order to achieve this, development and commissioning of Store and Forward Message Switches, expansion of Store and Forward Telegraph Systems, replacement of terminal devices by electronic teleprinters, utilisation of electronic key boards in place of Morse equipment and modern management aids for operational and network control have been planned. The Plan envelops the entire country's telegraph network including cities and towns.

New sugar and alcohol policy

194. SHRI K. MOHANAN : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether partial decontrol and sizeable increase in prices of molasses are being considered by Government in view of the fact that the new sugar and alcohol policy is likely to adversely affect alcohol-based industries which employ more than 10,000 persons;

(b) if so, whether Government will keep this aspect in mind while framing the new sugar and alcohol policy; and

(c) whether the alcohol-based industries and distilleries and their employees will be taken into confidence before announcing the revised sugar and alcohol policy ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c) Formulation of a new policy on molasses and alcohol will, no doubt, involve consideration of all relevant issues including the question of decontrol of molasses and implications thereof.

Price of molasses

195. SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that various official committees had recommended against partial or total decontrol of molasses as well as for pegging at a low level the price of molasses in view of the fact that it was only an effluent of the sugar industry and no additional production cost was involved in it; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and of the sugar-alcohol policy if any, evolved in the light thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) and (b) A number of Committees, including Expert Agencies have examined various issues, including the question of fixation of prices of molasses and alcohol. The recommendations of these Committees/Agencies are kept in view while reviewing matters relating to alcohol and molasses, including fixation of prices thereof.